(d) if so, details thereon along with the rivers, so far, identified particularly in Kerala affected with this problem.

(e) the details of the ecological and environmental problems caused by the phenomenon; and

(f) the details of steps taken by Government to prevent further damages?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Studies carried out by Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram on Periyar and Bharatapuzha rivers in Kerala have indicated that due to excessive sand mining there is an imbalance in the natural environmental setting of river-eco-systems, depletion of sediment supply, lowering of elevation of stream flow affecting the water table of the floodplain, stress on biological community and damage to engineering structures like bridges, bank protection etc.

(f) As per the provisions of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991, mining of sand in Coastal Regulation Zone areas is a prohibited activity.

Conservation and purification of rivers

1910. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have started a scheme of conserving and purifying major rivers in the country;

(b) if so, how many rivers have been taken up under the scheme; and

(c) what is the present status of the implementation of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) is under implementation to cover pollution abatement works in 157 towns along polluted stretches of 31 rivers spread over 18 States.

(c) Out of total number of 797scheme sanctioned so far under N.R.C.P. for the pollution abatement of rivers, 423 schemes have been completed. An amount of Rs. 1336 crore has been released so far by Government to the State Governments for the implementation of the schemes against an approved cost of Rs. 4688 crore. The following types of work of pollution abatement are being implemented under NRCP.

Interception and diversion works to capture the raw sewage flowing into the river through open drains and divert them for treatment.

Sewage treatment plants for treating the diverted sewage.

Low cost sanitation works to prevent open defecation on river banks.

Electric crematoria and improved wood crematoria to conserve the use of wood and help in ensuring proper cremation of bodies brought to the burning ghats.

River front development works such as improvement of bathing ghats etc.

Other minor miscellaneous works like afforestation, public participation, public awareness etc.

Pollution in NOIDA

1911. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sector-62, NOIDA is highly polluted sector;

(b) whether its institutional area is virtually a dumping ground of garbage and filth generating in and around the sector;

(c) whether garbage dump keeps on burning throughout day and night giving rise to thick and black smoke in the area; and

(d) what action Government propose to take to prevent this in the larger interest of the residents of the area?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) As per the recent inspection carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board and the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board officials, a vacant plot belonging to the NOIDA having an area of 350 x